

Thrive

Volume 1, Issue 3
Summer 2009



Sustainable Agriculture in Calvert County

Welcome

... to **Thrive**, a quarterly newsletter focusing on sustainable agriculture in Calvert County, Maryland.

The Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County formed The Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup with members from the Soil Conservation District, the Department of Economic Development, the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Office, the County Health Department, the Department of General Services and the Department of Planning and Zoning to promote agriculture in the County.



Earl Buddy Hance is a fourth generation Calvert County

farmer whose family farms over 400 acres in the county. Congratulations to Buddy on his recent appointment as the new Secretary to the Maryland Department of Agriculture. We look forward to his leadership toward a sustainable future for agriculture in our State and in Calvert.

Farmers' Markets – Vendors Wanted

The popularity of Calvert County's farmers' markets is on the rise as consumers realize that locally grown produce is fresher, tastes better and promises more healthful benefits due to its higher quality. In fact, University of Maryland agricultural economist Jim Hanson was recently quoted in the Washington Post as saying "Consumer demand for local food is growing so fast that it exceeds supply."

Calvert County's farming community is going strong and residents currently have four markets to choose from – all of which offer a host of delicious, nutritious and local Southern Maryland produce:

- North Beach** Fridays, 6 – 9 p.m. through October 2
5th Street between Chesapeake and Bay Avenues, North Beach
- Lusby** Mondays, 9 a.m. – Noon, through August 24
Family Wellness and Fitness Center, Town Center Drive, Lusby
- Prince Frederick** Saturdays, 9 a.m. – Noon, through November 28
Prince Frederick Shopping Center Parking Lot, Prince Frederick
- Solomons** Thursdays, 4 – 8 p.m. through November 19
Riverwalk parking lot north of Solomons Pavilion, adjacent to Solomons Island Road

An additional farmers' market is proposed for the 2010 season in St. Leonard.

Several of the existing Calvert County farmers' markets still have space for interested vendors. For information, please contact the market managers at the numbers below:

- North Beach Farmers' Market
Contact: North Beach Town Hall (410-257-9618)
- Lusby Farmers' Market
Contact: The Judy Center (410-535-7836)
- Prince Frederick and Solomons Farmers' Markets
Contact: Calvert County Department of Economic Development (410-535-4583)

Farmers are required to join the Calvert County Farmers' Market Association and pay a \$25 fee for the season at the Prince Frederick and Solomons markets and this fee permits farmers to sell at both locations. For information on seasonal fees for the North Beach Farmers Market, please contact the North Beach Town Hall.





Upcoming Events Mark your calendar!

Grow Local Challenge August 19th from 7:00pm to 9:00pm
Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, Prince Frederick. Presentation by Ginger Myers, Regional Extension Specialist, on identifying marketing opportunities. See article for more details.

Farm to School Program September 14th – 18th. State-wide initiative to educate children where their food comes from.

2009 Maryland Woodland Steward Training September 17th – 20th Camp Pecometh, Centreville, MD. Contact Nevin Dawson ndawson@umd.edu or 410-827-8056 x125

2009 WREC Pumpkin and Sweet Corn Twilight Meeting
Tuesday, September 22nd from 4:30pm to 7:00pm Wye Research and Education Center, 211 Farm Lane, Queenstown, MD 21658. Review and discussion of current field research and grower concerns. Light dinner fare. Michael Newell mnewell@umd.edu or 410-827-7388.

WMREC Fruit & Vegetable Twilight Meeting Thursday, September 24th from 4:30pm to 7:00pm. Western Maryland Research & Education Center, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756. A firsthand look at ongoing projects including pumpkins, apples on their own rootstocks, Bt sweet corn, high tunnels & more. RSPV 301-432-2767x350 or cmason@umd.edu.

Calvert County Green Expo Sunday, September 27th from 11:00am to 4:00pm; Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum. Speakers, displays & products for creating a greener Calvert. www.calvertgreenpo.org calvertgreenexpo@gmail.com

2009 National Tree Farm Convention September 29th – 30th Washington DC. Growing policy for your woodlands – be heard! www.treefarmssystem.org

Calvert County Fair September 30th to October 4th, 2009
Calvert County Fairgrounds, Prince Frederick, MD

National 4H Week, October 4th to 10th 4-H has three primary program areas: science, engineering and technology; healthy living; & citizen-ship. Contact Elaine Bailey, elbailey@umd.edu, 410-535-3662.

PRAD – Patuxent River Appreciation Days October 9th to 11th Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons

Calvert Farm Tour Sunday, October 18th, 1-4 p.m. at David and Susan Cox's - Spider Hall Farm, 3915 Hallowing Point Rd., Prince Frederick. Tobacco heritage, historical displays, corn maze & more.



Calvert County Forest Conservancy District Board

*Committed to telling the benefits of
sustainable forest management in Calvert.*

The Calvert Forestry Board is a group of citizens who serve as advocates for forestry in Calvert County. The five member Board is funded annually by a grant from the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County and seeks to support forest education and awareness activities throughout the county. Programs include the Calvert Environthon, the Arbor Day Poster Contest, the School Forest Program, the fall Tree Farm Tour, an annual newsletter and a new website.

The new website, published November, 2008 at www.calvertforestry.org is designed to educate citizens about the Forestry Board's mission and to provide a collection of resources for people interested in sustainable forestry management. It includes upcoming events, news and links.

Most of Calvert County's forests are privately owned, yet provide benefits for all our citizens. Some benefits include fiber, firewood, flood control, species habitat and carbon sinks. If you would like to learn how to better manage your forest resources, whether to maximize timber value or to protect water quality, visit their website or contact them at forester@calvertforestry.org





MD Homegrown School Lunch Week Celebration



Fact: it is not uncommon for families to be 3 or more generations removed from the farm. This means that many people, especially youngsters, don't understand the importance of agriculture to our daily lives, assuring us a safe, wholesome food supply. It is a rather disconcerting fact for those of us involved in agriculture. But we can't dwell on the negative; we need to work to improve everyone's understanding, not just our children's. And how do we accomplish that? To help our children understand the link between the food supply and our community's farmers, Calvert County will join other MD jurisdictions to celebrate MD Homegrown School Lunch Week September 14-18, 2009.

MD Homegrown School Lunch Week is often referenced as Farm 2 School Week. It came about as a result of legislation signed into law in May, 2008 and first celebrated in September 2008. It is a joint effort between the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland State Board of Education, and is designed to both benefit our local economy by bringing more locally-grown products to school lunches, as well as to educate young people about their food supply.

One of the first goals of MD Homegrown School Lunch Week is to help youngsters understand exactly how and where their food is grown. Our farmers are a treasure, and we must educate people about their importance. What better way to begin the educational process than with our youth! There are activities being planned to do a "farm festival" at two local Calvert elementary schools. Plum Point Elementary School and Appeal Elementary School will host the celebration for all their students. Thanks to the Calvert County Public Schools Lunch Program, local produce will be served for the school children, helping them to appreciate and enjoy the bounty of our county's farmers. They will have an opportunity to meet local farmers and to learn about different events that happen on a farm, such as planting and harvesting crops. We are looking for participation from our local farming community to make this a successful event. For more information or to volunteer, contact the University of Maryland Extension Office at 410-535-3662 or 301-855-1150 and ask for Elaine Bailey.

Land Preservation

Calvert County's TDR (Transferable Development Rights) Program is one of the oldest in the nation and celebrates its 30th Anniversary this year. Our successful program has received international recognition and to date has preserved over 19,200 acres in Calvert County. From time to time the program has needed to evolve to keep up with changing circumstances. Currently much of our preservation is relying heavily on new development. In the past few years, development has slowed, while interest in land preservation has remained steady. The County is considering changes in new district requirements to keep a balance in allowing new desirable properties to enter into the program, while also protecting the farmers already enrolled and committed to preservation. Changes being considered include limits on district sizes, when land can be excluded from a district and how properties are ranked for County purchases. For more information about preservation in Calvert or to view a draft of the preservation map, log onto the County's website at: <http://www.co.cal.md.us/government/departments/planning> Questions? Contact Veronica Cristo at (410)535-1600 x2489 or cristova@co.cal.md.us.



Resources

University of Maryland AgMarketing Website <http://agmarketing.umd.edu/Home.html>

- Newsletters & resources to help you develop marketing plans & identify profitable opportunities

Calvert County Health Department <http://www.calverthealth.org/community/environmentalhealthservices>

- Can address most of your value added questions. Call (443)532-5636 or email llaschalt@dhhm.state.md.us

Calvert County Forestry Board <http://www.calvertforestry.org/>

- Information on sustainable forest management in Calvert County

University of MD Cooperative Extension <http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu/EducationalMWS.html>

- Forest Stewardship Education & Woodland Steward Training

Calvert Agriculture Website www.calvertag.com

- General information about agriculture in Calvert including lists of local farm products, news, links and organizations

Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
c/o Board of County Commissioners
175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Help the County Save Resources
and Benefit the Environment –
Request to receive this newsletter
electronically. Send your request to
cristova@co.cal.md.us and be sure
to include your full name. We will
email you a link every time a new
edition is produced. You can also
view current and past editions at
www.calvertag.com.



Attention

Grow Local Challenge New Opportunities in Farming

Wednesday, August 19th from 7:00 to 9:00pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Prince Frederick

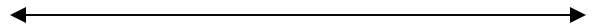
In March, Joel Salatin spoke at the Prince Frederick Library to standing room only crowds. Over 80 people attended each session. Over 50 of those attendees identified themselves as new or “wanna be” farmers. Mr. Salatin encouraged them to “Take advantage of people moving into the country. Your market is moving to you.” If you are a farmer in Calvert County, your market is over 90,000 people strong – that’s in the county alone without going to any of the major cities within easy driving distance.

If you are a farmer or want to be one, we encourage you to keep the momentum going and come learn about new opportunities. Learn to take advantage of Calvert’s strategic position and respond to the growing interest in local foods. This slower economic time may be the perfect time for you to develop new products, reach new markets and reposition yourself to where you want to be.

Calvert’s Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Office are pleased to invite Ginger Myers to speak to area farmers. Ms. Myers is a Regional Extension Specialist for Agricultural Marketing. She is an expert in working with farmers to identify marketing opportunities for their crops and will address Calvert’s unique possibilities.

Afterwards, Ben Beale, from the St. Mary’s Extension Office will talk about some local opportunities and experiences including FDA approval for acidified foods and a market request for catnip.

There is no charge but registration is requested to accommodate refreshments with local foods. Please call the Calvert County Extension Office at 410-535-3662 or 301-855-1150.



This fall, tentatively scheduled for early November, the dialogue will continue with a workshop between local chefs/restaurants and interested farmers. Learn how to accommodate each others needs and open up the opportunity to serve a whole new market.

